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Black Tie, But Nary a Kilt

By Stephanie Mansfield

It was not your average college reunion.

The invitation to the 31st Annual Oxford and Cambridge Dinner held last night at the International Club read, "Dress: black tie, college blazer, evening kilt or equivalent."

"I don't own an evening kilt," said retired Sen. Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania former Balliol College instructor. "I'm a Scot, but not *that* Scot."

The dinner was open only to sons and a few daughters of Oxford and Cambridge (no wives or husbands). The crowd numbered over 200, and there wasn't a kilt in sight.

This nostalgic and very private gathering attracts a very prestigious guest list, one that Washington socialites would be hard-pressed to match.

CIA director Adm. Stansfield Turner (Exeter, Oxford), British Ambassador Sir Peter Ramsbotham (Magdalen, Oxford), former Ambassador George McGhee (Queens, Oxford), British Ambassador to the U.N. Ivor Richard (Pembroke, Oxford) and Pulitzer prize-winning columnist George Will (Magdalen, Oxford) all toasted the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

Will, accepting congratulations on his Pulitzer announced yesterday, said he had heard about the prize weeks ago "through the usual sieve-like leaks.

"But I think they sent the telegram to the wrong house," he joked. Someone inquired about the cash award.

"You mean there's money, too?" he asked.

The men, mostly in black ties with a few college blazers, outnumbered the women by about 30 to 1, and Oxford alumni outnumbered Cambridge.

Toasts and speeches were offered, as well as after-dinner port. The Americans all affected British accents for the evening, and the British were as usual, articulate and amusing.

Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D-Md.) (Balliol, Oxford), a former Rhodes Scholar, brought his wife, Christine. Did he invoke some congressional privilege? Not at all. Christine Sarbanes is also an Oxford graduate, and served as toastmaster for the event last year.

"This is a very elite group," she said, laughing. Not at all average.

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